

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0010] with the following amended paragraph:

[0010] One embodiment of an available-to-promise (ATP) system for processing customer requests according to the invention comprises a supply chain planning component configured to allow a planner to update a model of a supply chain for one or more products sold by the ATP system and an order ~~promising~~processing component configured to allow a planner to update an old supply plan used to process requests with a new supply plan. The order promising component is capable of (i) copying a current supply plan used by the ATP system to process customer requests to create a second supply plan; (ii) thereafter, receiving a first plurality of customer requests at the ATP system and processing orders from the first plurality of requests against the current supply plan while the ATP system runs the model of the supply chain process with the second supply plan as part of a process that creates a new supply plan; (iii) after the new supply plan is created, synchronizing orders from the first plurality of customer requests scheduled against the current supply plan into the new supply plan until a threshold number of orders in the first plurality of requests is reached; (iv) thereafter, temporarily stopping promising new customer requests received by the ATP while checking all remaining orders from the first plurality of requests not checked during the synchronizing process against the new supply plan; and (v) after the remaining orders from the first plurality of requests are processed, switching the new plan supply for the current supply plan so that the ATP system can process future customer requests against the new supply plan.

Please replace paragraph [0015] with the following amended paragraph:

[0015] Fig. 1 is a block diagram of an available-to-promise (ATP) ordering system 10 according to one embodiment of the present invention. ATP System 10 is programmed to enable sophisticated, fast, accurate and flexible order promising for an organization. System 10 includes an order ~~promising~~processing component 20 that receives, processes and responds to requests received from customers 12, such as requests to purchase one or more products. Responses to the requests are in the form of a promised delivery date for the one or more

products. As used herein, each customer request may include one or more orders. For example, a customer may place a request with system 10 for 20 units of Product A to be received by Date 1, 50 units of Product A to be received by Date 2 and 10 units of Product C to be received by Date 3. Each of these individual requests within the customer request is referred to herein as an order. System 10 is programmed to be able to fulfill (promise) orders within a request independent of other orders in the request.

Please replace paragraph [0016] with the following amended paragraph:

[0016] In processing customer requests, order processing component 20 reserves available inventory (or inventory that will be available in the future) for the customer from one or more warehouses best suited to ship the products to the customer or, if the products are not currently in inventory, from one or more manufacturing facilities best suited to complete the products. Requests from the customer are typically made with a client system (not shown) that accesses system 10 through an interface 15. The client system may be, for example, a personal computer.

Please replace paragraph [0017] with the following amended paragraph:

[0017] In one embodiment, order processing component 20 is part of a distributed computing system and multiple client systems communicate with order processing component 20 via the Internet. Accordingly, in some embodiments of the invention, order processing component 20 provides support for handling multiple concurrent order ~~promising-processing~~ requests by implementing locking and read consistency of data so that the same supply is not promised to multiple customers.

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] Thus, as can be appreciated by a person of skill in the art, supply plan 24 is an important part of system 10 for enabling order ~~promising-processing~~ component 20 to accurately fulfill customer requests. That is, system 10 needs access to supply plan 24 on a 24 hour a day, seven day a week basis in order to respond to customer requests in real time with promises of

future delivery dates. Because the accuracy of promises made by system 10 is directly related to the accuracy of supply plan 10, it can be appreciated that it is important to update supply plan 24 on a regular basis.

Please replace paragraph [0028] with the following amended paragraph:

[0028] At the completion of the model run, new supply plan 24 is created. Some embodiments of the invention include a database entry associated with each supply plan that indicates to order ~~promising-processing~~ component 20 whether or not the supply plan is to be used in fulfilling customer requests. In such embodiments, the new supply plan is not yet marked active at this point and orders are still processed against Plan 1.

Please replace paragraph [0029] with the following amended paragraph:

[0029] Next, a pre-allocation program is run that pre-allocates supply to specific classes of demand (step 58) and a summary program is run that stores summary supply and demand information from the new supply plan in a separate table (step 60). The separate summary table is used by order ~~promising-processing~~ component 20 whenever possible to quickly retrieve summarized availability information without computing availability from more detailed supply and demand tables. The pre-allocation program uses allocation rules 22 to pre-allocate selected volume or percentages of products and/or supply in accordance with the business objectives of the organization. As shown in Fig. 3, the summary and pre-allocation programs run from time t2 to time t3.

Please replace paragraph [0037] with the following amended paragraph:

[0037] After the remaining orders have been processed, the supply plan for order ~~promising-processing~~ component 20 is switched from the old supply plan to the new supply plan (step 68) and customer requests are processed against the new supply plan (step 70). In one embodiment plan switching is accomplished by changing a pointer to the new supply plan and setting a flag associated with the new supply plan to indicate that the new supply plan is available for ATP processing.

Please replace paragraph [0038] with the following amended paragraph:

[0038] Having fully described several embodiments of the present invention, other equivalent or alternative methods of practicing the present invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art. For example, while system 10 was described as including allocation rules 22, such rules are optional. In some embodiments of the invention order processing component 20 fulfills orders based on a supply plan 24 without checking allocation rules. Also, in another embodiment where allocation rules 22 are used, system 10 includes ~~[[and]]~~ an allocated supply plan (not shown) that is used by order processing component ~~22~~20 to fulfill orders instead of supply plan 24. The allocated supply plan is created from a combination of the allocation rules 22 and supply plan 24 and saved separate from each. Also, in other embodiments, the creation of a summary table in step 60 is optional.